

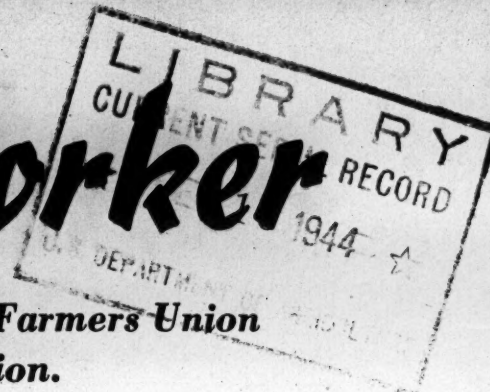
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TEE DAVIS CASE BEFORE THE SUPREME COURT

The United States Supreme Court will soon be called upon to decide whether or not Arkansas Sharecropper's cabin constitutes a home which a citizen has a constitutional right to defend against illegal entry.

A sentence of 10 years in prison was upheld last week by the State Supreme Court of Arkansas against Tee Davis convicted of assault on a plantation owner, Harold Weaver of Edmondson, Crittenden County, Arkansas. According to the trial record Weaver had joined two other plantation "laws" deputy sheriffs in a raid on homes of all sharecroppers near Edmondson searching for a cattle thief. The last cabin in the settlement, occupied by Tee Davis and his wife, was reached about 10 P.M. just as the sharecroppers were going to bed. The dogs of neighbors were barking. Some one called out in the darkness open the door you Black S. O. B. and began kicking the door down. Davis grabbed his shotgun and fired through the door at the intruder. Pistol shots answered the shot gun. Weaver was hit in the hand but was not injured seriously. The other two raiders arrived and upon a demand to open the door in the name of the law Davis gave up and was carried to the Crittenden County Jail and held from March 22 to November 23, 1943 awaiting trial.

A jury composed of plantation owners heard the case and it was brought out that Tee Davis had in 1936 also been involved in a strike of cotton choppers. Despite the instructions of the presiding judge as to the law the jury promptly returned a verdict of guilty and imposed the heaviest sentence under the law for assault.

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the Workers Defense League and other organizations concerned with the preservation of civil liberties of citizens are interested in the Tee Davis case. K. T. Sutton of Helena, Arkansas, chief counsel for the STFU, representing Davis will handle the appeal to the U. S. Supreme Court.

Harold Weaver, the plantation owner, is the defendant in a civil suit brought by 30 union members whose property consisting of houses and land near Edmondson was taken away from them through illegal tax sales during the depression. The case has been in court for two years and attorneys for Weaver have fought a delaying action to prevent a decision from being handed down. It is alleged that

10th Union Meet Has Largest Attendance In Many Years

The 10th Annual Convention of the Southern Tenant Farmers Union met in Memphis November 9th and 10th, 1943. One hundred fifty-one delegates representing union locals in eight states attended. Numerous visitors from nearby areas and the city of Memphis also attended the sessions, which were open to the public. Speakers representing the War Manpower Commission, U. S. Extension Service, War Food Administration and Farm Security Administration addressed the convention, which discussed problems of migrant farm workers, co-operatives, and post-war plans for the rural South.

Among the guests of the convention from labor organizations were George L. Gooze, Southern Director of the A. F. of L.; Cornelius Maiden, A. F. of L. organizer; Leon B. Schachter, Meat and Cannery Workers Union; Howard Thomas, Laundry Workers organizer; Lester Goings, organizer, Operating Engineers; R. Friel, International Ladies Garment Workers Union; Elaine Draper, Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America; Herman Gerhig, Memphis organizer, A. F. of L.

Speaking to the convention after having been denied the right to address an open meeting of his own union in the city, was A. Philip Randolph, International President of the Pullman Porters Union.

After adopting a program calling for the use of Southern farm workers in war time agriculture, and a post-war plan for rural people, the convention adjourned after having elected the following as officers for 1944.

H. L. Mitchell, President; F. R. Betton, Vice President; Executive Council: W. A. Johnson, John Alford Gammill, J. E. Clayton, J. F. Hynds, Roy E. Raley, Taylor Turner and O. C. Morgan.

Weaver is the front for a group of Crittenden County planters who seek to drive out all remaining small property owners. Two years ago several Crittenden County officials were convicted in Federal Court for depriving numerous citizens of their civil rights. These individuals are now serving their sentences but the same powerful planters retain control of the county including the courts of justice.

Union Members From South Working in Jersey Food Plants

Nearly 200 members of the STFU are now employed in food plants of New Jersey. These workers, Negro and white, men and women, who otherwise would be unemployed, were transported during the months of December and January at the expense of employers. They were given temporary membership transfers to the A. F. of L. Meat and Cannery Workers Union, whose headquarters are in Camden and placed on jobs by the A. F. of L. Union, which has closed shop contracts with practically all canning and packing plants in that area. They are paid 50c an hour, with time and half for all overtime work. They average about 50 hours per week and earn \$20 to \$25 per week. Good housing is furnished by the companies. Meals are supplied at low cost, though family groups rent light housekeeping quarters in the camps.

STFU members who have crops to make this year will return about March 1, while others will not return South until May for the cotton chopping season, which lasts about six weeks. Arrangements are now being worked out by the two unions for 2,000 or more workers who are members of the STFU to be employed during the rush season in the South Jersey truck growing area, which begins in late June and lasts until September. This work season in New Jersey comes at a time when total unemployment exists on the cotton plantations of the Mid-South.

For the first time in the history of the STFU its members are enjoying the benefits of collective bargaining. STFU grievance committees are functioning in the plants and camps. The spokesman for the STFU committees are recognized and any dispute or complaint of a member that arises is taken up direct with company officials or jointly with the A. F. of L. plant steward. Invaluable experience is being gained by local STFU leaders in dealing with employers.

The A. F. of L. Meat and Cannery Workers Union is headed by Leon B. Schachter of Camden, who was a visitor to the 10th Annual Convention of the STFU in November. Mr. Schachter's Union has the only closed shop contract covering farm workers in the world. This is the Seabrook Farm, which has upwards of 30,000 acres in cultivation. An article on the Seabrooks farm appeared in the Reader's Digest January, 1944.

FARM LABOR PEONAGE NOW BEFORE CONGRESS

Under pressure from the American Farm Bureau the Congress of the United States may again enact a farm labor supply bill that freezes in virtual peonage the thousands of unemployed Southern farm workers.

The measure as passed by the House of Representatives in December was drafted to turn over the entire program of supplying the nation's farms with labor in 1944 to the Farm Bureau dominated 48 State Agricultural Extension Services. The Senate Committee which held hearings on January 18th, reported out a bill which, if finally adopted, will permit the Extension Service to prohibit the transportation of American farm workers but will authorize the War Food Administrator to bring in foreign workers to take their places on American farms.

Both the House and Senate versions of the farm labor supply bill retain the notorious Pace Amendment, which prohibits the transfer of American farm workers out of a county without the consent in writing of the local county agent for each individual worker. The setting of minimum wages and housing standards is also forbidden for American workers as in the 1943 Public Law 45.

H. L. Mitchell, President of the Southern Tenant Farmers Union, in a statement submitted to the Senate Appropriations Committee urged that Congress appropriate funds to the WFA and bar the Extension Service from any part in the program. Mitchell told the Committee that the bill as passed by the House was even more unworkable than the 1943 legislation. He urged Congress to adopt a reasonable program for supplying government transportation for American farm workers or else to grant enough funds to the U. S. Employment Service to recruit farm workers and let the employers and workers make their arrangements for transportation in the same manner as industrial workers are placed on jobs. Mitchell pointed out in his statement that there would be no need to import foreign workers, use prisoners of war or take soldiers out of training camps to harvest crops if a plan were adopted that would permit an estimated 200,000 Southern farm workers to be transferred to areas where farm labor shortages exist.

10TH CONVENTION ADOPTS PROGRAM

The following is a brief of resolutions adopted by the Annual Convention of the Southern Tenant Farmers Union, Memphis, Tennessee, November 10, 1943:

1. Expressed the appreciation of the Union for the support of many friends of the organization who joined in sponsoring the annual National Sharecroppers Week and for the support of officials of the A. F. of L., C. I. O. and Railway Labor for aid given in advancing the interests of STFU members.
2. Authorized incoming officers to employ a full time educational director to develop educational and recreational programs in all locals and set up a youth section to be known as the Southern Pioneers.
3. Authorized officers of the Union to work out a program for securing employment for under-employed Southern farm workers for six to eight months each year when there is no work on cotton plantations.
4. Endorsed a campaign to petition the War Food Administration to employ native American farm workers before importing Mexican, Jamaican and Bahamain labor. Pledged 50,000 workers to accept employment in other areas.
5. Demanded representation for agricultural labor on regional labor management committees of the War Manpower Commission for the purposes of determining policies and programs.
6. Adopted a resolution on Public Law 45 outlining a program for 1944 to be operated directly by a single government agency without restrictions on movement of workers from their home counties. Demanded that State and County Extension Service devote their time to education of farmers and stop recruiting farm labor.
7. Urged use be made of unemployed farm workers on other jobs during off seasons.
8. Opposed the use of war prisoners on farms and in food processing plants.
9. Adopted Executive Council's report on Rural South After the War as the official program for the Union.
10. Changed the Constitution of the STFU to provide for uniform dues of \$3.00 per year for all families, \$1.00 legal defense fees and \$1.00 initiation fee for all new members. Provided for transfers to Migratory section for paid-up members in any local. Authorized acceptance of fees from co-operative associations for all members of associations affiliated with STFU co-op department.
11. Continued wartime policy of assigning organizers and officers to areas near their homes.
12. Approved setting up of special committees: Migratory, Legal, Educational, Co-operatives, Farm Ownership.
13. Authorized a 1944 membership campaign to secure paid-up membership for the year.
14. Approved work of legal department and the employment of an attorney and investigators. Levied legal assessment on all members of \$1.00 per year for each family.
15. Approved program of resettling families on farms developed

America Needs Food; Millions of Acres Lie Idle

According to the annual report of the Secretary of Agriculture the expansion of farm land is needed in the United States. Mr. Wickard states that there are 40 million acres of land that could be reclaimed for cultivation by irrigation, drainage and clearing.

Millions of acres of this potential farm land lie in Western states but it is classed unfit for farming purposes by the Taylor Grazing Act. A striking example of the unfairness of this law enacted by Congress in behalf of the powerful cattle barons of the West is shown in the case of 50 farm families who own 26,000 acres of fertile land in Dona Ana County, New Mexico. These families, most of whom are Negroes, homesteaded this land in 1926 and have held on to it for years, though they have been unable to get either private or public credit to develop their holdings.

Appeals to government agencies, including the Farm Security Administration, have gone unheeded. The Department of Interior administers the Taylor Grazing Act and the Grazing section of the Department is stacked with friends of the cattle barons. An agency or individual that makes inquiry on behalf of the homesteaders is given a stereotyped reply that these lands are unfit for farming purposes due to lack of water and that the drilling of irrigation wells is impractical. The cattle men want to drive out the homesteaders so they can buy or rent the rich land for grazing their herds at a few cents an acre. John Sweat, a member of the STFU, who appeared before the Senate Committee on Public Lands at a hearing in Albuquerque last August, was Ku Kluxed upon his return home, after telling the story of the homesteaders. It is reported that the Federal Grand Jury called in Emmett Isaacs, ring leader of the Cattlemen's Association, and questioned him about his part in the affair. Isaacs is prominent in the community and is a leading member of the Methodist Church in Las Cruces.

Powerful friends of the Southern Tenant Farmers Union are taking up the fight for the homesteaders in Washington and it is predicted that once a real investigation is made the true facts will become known and the terrorizers of a peaceful people will be brought to justice.

SPRUCE PINE CO-OP STORE HOLDS ANNUAL MEET

Shareholders in the Spruce Pine Co-operative Store in Alabama will hold their annual meeting at Hurricane School House on February 12. J. F. Hynds, store manager, reports the co-operative business to be increasing each month and that the stock in the store is greatly enlarged. Miss Nancy Gabriel is the assistant manager.

by Farm Ownership Committee.

16. Urged support of Farm Security Administration to keep door of opportunity open to Southern farm people.

Union Calls Upon Food Administration for Wages Due Workers Under FSA Contracts

H. L. Mitchell, President, Southern Tenant Farmers Union, on December 18 sent a letter to Col. Phillip Bruton, Deputy Administrator of the WFA, asking for an investigation and payment by the government of wages owed members of the Union who were guaranteed four days' work a week under FSA contracts while in the West and Florida last year. Mitchell estimated that members of the Union did not get to work more than 50% of the guaranteed time while on these jobs. He said that he had recently learned that other workers had been paid for time lost and that the STFU believed its members were entitled to equal consideration. Workers who were employed under FSA contract should send in a statement of the time they lost to the STFU office. Address Box 443, Memphis 1, Tennessee.

STFU Member Sings With Roland Hayes in London's Albert Hall

The son of C. C. Watson, President of the STFU Fishing Lake Local in St. Francis County, Arkansas, was in the Air Forces Engineers' Chorus that sang in London's famous Albert Hall on the night of September 28. Roland Hayes, the great Negro singer, went by plane to England to lead the chorus. The American soldiers were accompanied by the London Symphony Orchestra in a program of Southern folk songs and spirituals that swept the audience off its chairs and when they finished even the Orchestra members stomped their feet and applauded.

Before joining the Army young Watson was the leading member of the St. Francis County "Union Quartet" that often appeared on convention programs.

"FORGOTTEN MEN"

The end of the war may now be in sight, but whether peace comes in one year or five, the Southern sharecropper is going to be effected—adversely, we fear. There is now little talk of extending the four freedoms, and the age of the common man is heard no more. All the talk is of national interests. It is no wonder that our soldiers don't know what they are fighting for. The money-changers are again in the temple. Labor is shackled while huge profits are wrung from the blood, sweat and tears of the poor. The rich are getting richer—and they are preparing for the peace—a peace that when it comes may be worse than the war.

We can do something about this. We can build now while there is time, the only true democracy we have ever known here in the South, our own organization. We, too, can prepare for the peace so that when it comes we will not be the forgotten men we were up until we organized the Southern Tenant Farmers Union in 1934 and begun to make our wants and hopes known throughout the land. 1944 may well be the most critical year we have faced in our 10 stormy years of existence as a Union. So far we have withstood the onslaughts of depression, violence, race hatred, eviction, discrimination, internal strife and now a world-wide war.

We have held on up until now because we can not forget that when our Union was first organized there was want, there was fear, few men of our class dared hold up their heads and speak freely, and often even our religion belonged to another man—the planter who owned the church house and paid the preacher. After the Union came we won a few victories here and there and the four freedoms became real to a few thousand men. We no longer felt that we were forgotten men. We do not want to be forgotten again when the peace comes. The help of every member of our Union is needed. Here is what you can do to help spread the four freedoms in our own backyard:

For the year 1944 the Southern Tenant Farmers Union has adopted a program of extending organization North, South, East and West. To do this we need money. A 1944 budget of \$30,000 is called for. From January 1 to February 1 we received a total of \$1,393.46 from all sources. Pledges of \$1,500 more have been made. We have to raise \$27,106.54 during the next 11 months. Will you do your part? If so, fill out the enclosed blank, mail it to us along with a money order or check. Cash may be sent if you register your letter.

SOUTHERN TENANT FARMERS UNION

Box 443

Memphis, Tennessee

Enclosed find \$.....
(Check X)

.....I want to pay 1944 membership dues for my family (\$3.00 dues, \$1.00 legal defense, (\$1.00 initiation fee if a new member) for all members of the family, husband, wife and children living at home.

.....I want to contribute \$.....to the Forgotten Man's Fund.

.....I will get new members. Send me an organizer's credential.

Name..... Number in family.....

Address..... Town..... State..... Rt..... Box No.....